

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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R 190800Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4312  
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE  
AMCONSUL GENOA  
AMCONSUL MILAN  
AMCONSUL NAPLES  
AMCONSUL PALERMO

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E.O. 11652 N/A  
TAGS: PINT, IT  
SUBJECT: A REFLECTION ON SOME BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

REF: MILAN 1063

SUMMARY. AMCONGEN MILAN REFTEL, BASING ITS CONCLUSION INTERVIEWS WITH  
SOME TWO DOZEN KEY ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY  
(PCI) OFFICIALS IN THE MILAN CONSULAR DISTRICT, IMPLIES  
THAT THE PCI IN THIS KEY ITALIAN REGION HAS UNDERGONE SOME  
VERY FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES.  
ACCORDING TO REFTEL, PCI LOCAL OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED QUOTE  
APPEAR SUBSTANTIALLY HONEST IN THEIR COMMITMENT TO WESTERN  
STYLE DEMOCRACY, LOYALTY TO EC AND NATO, FRIENDSHIP TO MIXED  
MARKET ORIENTED ECONOMY. END QUOTE. WHILE CONCEDED THAT  
THE PCI HAS CHANGED MARKEDLY SINCE THE 1940S AND 1950S  
(AS HAVE ALL THE OTHER ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTIES), THE  
EMBASSY, BASED ON IN-DEPTH CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS AT THE  
MOST SENIOR LEVELS OF THE PCI AND ON DAILY SCRUTINY OF  
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PCI ACTIONS AND WRITINGS, QUESTIONS MILAN'S RATHER  
OPTIMISTIC CONCLUSIONS, WHICH CERTAINLY DO NOT APPLY TO  
PCI'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. ALTHOUGH IN THE FINAL  
ANALYSIS THE QUESTION OF DIRECT PCI PARTICIPATION IN AN  
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS ONE FOR THE ITALIANS THEMSELVES TO  
DECIDE, WE SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SHOULD THIS IN FACT  
OCCUR, THERE WOULD BE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE US-ITALIAN

BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS NOT IN US INTERESTS TO TAKE ANY STEPS WHICH WOULD ASSIST THE PCI IN ACHIEVING ITS GOAL OF PARTICIPATION IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE KNOWN WE DO NOT FAVOR SUCH PARTICIPATION. END SUMMARY.

1. AMCONGEN MILAN, BASED ON A NUMBER OF CONTACTS WITH LOCAL PCI OFFICIALS, HAS PREPARED A THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND USEFUL ANALYSIS SUGGESTING THAT FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED IN THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY IN HIS CONSULAR DISTRICT. UTILIZING EVIDENCE GATHERED DURING VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS, MILAN CONCLUDES THAT PCI OFFICIALS QUOTE APPEAR SUBSTANTIALLY HONEST IN THEIR COMMITMENT TO WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY, LOYALTY TO EC AND NATO, FRIENDSHIP TOWARD US, INDEPENDENCE FROM SOVIET UNION, AND COMMITMENT TO MIXED MARKET ORIENTED ECONOMY. END QUOTE.

2. BASED ON OUR IN-DEPTH CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS AT THE MOST SENIOR LEVEL OF THE PARTY AND ON OUR DAILY SCRUTINY OF THE ACTIONS, PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS, AND WRITINGS OF THE PARTY AND ITS SENIOR OFFICIALS, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE FINDINGS REPORTED IN REFTEL CANNOT BE VERIFIED ON A NATIONAL LEVEL. WE DO NOT CHALLENGE THE ASSERTION THAT THE PCI HAS CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE LAST 30 YEARS, BUT VIRTUALLY ALL THE OTHER ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE ALSO CHANGED IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER DURING THE LAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THREE DECADES. (FOR THAT MATTER SO HAVE ALMOST ALL THE RULING COMMUNIST PARTIES INCLUDING THE SOVIET AND CHINESE PARTIES.)

3. LOOKING AT THE FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY, THE IMPORTANCE OF WHICH SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, ONE SEES WHERE THE LEAST CHANGE HAS OCCURRED IN THE PCI. INDIVIDUAL PCI LEADERS MAY POSSIBLY BE SINCERE AS REFTEL SUGGESTS IN THEIR DESIRE TO MOVE PARTY TO WESTERN, TRULY DEMOCRATIC POLICIES AND PRACTICES. BUT PARTY REMAINS TIGHTLY ORGANIZED AROUND A CLOSELY KNIT LEADERSHIP AND STILL OPERATES UNDER THE MARXIST-LENINIST PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM ALLOWING LITTLE ROOM FOR OPEN DEBATE AND EVEN LESS FOR DIVERGENCE ONCE A POLICY LINE HAS BEEN ADOPTED. THEREFORE, WE DO NOT FIND IT SURPRISING THAT IN THE COURSE OF APPROXIMATELY TWO DOZEN MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS LOCAL COMMUNIST OFFICIALS, MILAN OFFICERS FOUND A UNIFORMITY OF VIEWS WHICH CLOSELY FOLLOWED A LINE SET FORTH BY THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. (WE WOULD DISTINGUISH THIS UNIFORMITY OF VIEWS WITH THE VARIETY OF OPINIONS THAT ONE WOULD RECEIVE FROM A SIMILAR SAMPLING OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC OR SOCIALIST

OFFICIALS.) THE FACT

IS THAT THE PCI IS AND WILL REMAIN, AS PARTY SECRETARY  
GENERAL BERLINGUER TOLD AN AUDIENCE SOME MONTHS AGO  
AT NAPLES, A COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH DOES NOT INTEND, AS  
DID THE GERMAN SOCIALIST PARTY, TO HAVE ITS BAD GODESBERG  
(I.E. TO CHANGE INTO A WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY).

4. IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO REMEMBER THAT THE PCI, AS  
ITS LEADERS REPEATEDLY RECALL IS WORKING FOR THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF ITALY INTO A SOCIALIST (MARKIST-  
LENNIST STYLE) SOCIETY. ACCORDINGLY, WE WOULD  
SUGGEST THAT PCI TALK OF ITS COMMITMENT TO A PLURALISTIC  
DEMOCRACY MUST BE ANALYZED IN THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT.  
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WOULD THE PCI PERMIT, ASSUMING THAT IT WERE SUCCESSFUL  
IN SOCIALIZING ITALIAN SOCIETY, THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE  
OF POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH WOULD ADVOCATE THE RETURN TO  
A NEO-CAPITALIST FREE MARKET SOCIETY? ABSTRACTING FROM  
THE PCI'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS COUNTRIES WHERE COMMUNIST  
PARTIES ARE ALREADY IN POWER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT  
THIS WOULD HAPPEN SINCE WE ARE AWARE OF NO INSTANCE  
WHERE THE PCI HAS CRITICIZED A SOCIALIST STATE FOR THE  
ABSENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH HAVE AS THEIR BASIC  
CHARACTERISTIC AN IDEOLOGY IN CONTRAST TO SOCIALISM.  
IN ANY EVENT, COMMUNIST SPOKESMAN WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE  
ABOVE ARGUMENT IS ACADEMIC. IN A NONW-FAMOUS INTERVIEW

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 (ISO) W  
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R 190800Z JUL 78  
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CONCEDED TO A BRITISH SCHOLAR IN THE SPRING OF 1977 (AND PUBLISHED INSURVEY), A LEADING PCI THERORE-TICIAN, LUCIO LOBARRDO RADICE, ARGUED THAT THE QUESTION OF OPPOSITION PARTIES IS IRRELEVANT SINCE SOCIALISM IS A HIGHER FORM OF SOCIETY AND ONCE HAVING EXPERIENCED IT, NO CITIZEN WOULD WANT TO TURN BACK TO A DIFFERENT IDEOLOGICALLY BASED SYSTEM.

5. OUR CAREFUL MONITORING OF PCI ATTITUDES ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES LEAVES US WITH PROFOUND SKEPTICISM ABOUT ITS COMMITMENT TO NATO OR TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS FAITHFUL TO ITS PLATFORM PLEDGE TO BE NEITHR ANTI-AMERICAN NOR ANTI-SOVIET. ON A VARIETY OF OCCASSIONS PCI OFFICIALS HAVE TALED OF THE NEED FOR A DIFFERENT TYPE OF NATO FREE FROM AMERICAN HEGEMONY. THE PCI HAS RECENTYL EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT INCREASING ITALY'S DEFENSE SPEDNING IN CONNECTION WITH ITS NATO COMMITMENT AND IT HAS STRONGLY QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF THE NATO DECISION TO PROCEED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT

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OF THE AWACS. LAST AUGUST THE PCI JOINED WITH THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY AND 26 OTHER COMMUNIST PARTIES IN A DECLARATION OPPOSING AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE N-BOMB, BUT IT HAS NOT, SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION TO SUSPEND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOMB, CALLED OPENLY FOR ANY RECIPROCAL RESPONSE BY THE USSR TO REDUCE ITS MILITARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. AS PCI PRESIDENT LUIGI LONGO EXPRESSED IT IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE LEADING ITALIAN DAILY LAST DECEMBER, QUOTE THE SOVIET UNIONS IS THE LEADING FORCE FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD TODAY. END QUOTE. TAKING THIS ARGUMENT ONE STEP FURTHER, ONE WONDERS ABOUT THE TRUE COMMITMENT OF THE PCI TO AN ALLIANCE WHICH WAS ESTABLLISHED FOR THE SOLE PURPOLSE OF DEFENDING A GROUP OF SOVEREIGN STATES FROM A PERCEIVED SOVIET MILITARY THREAT.

6. NUMEROUS ITALIAN COMMENTATORS HAVE, IN RECENT MONTHS, NOTED THE CONTRADICTIONS IN PCI POSITIONS ON BASIC FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION AND SOVIET SOCIETY. WHILE THESE OBSERVERS NOT PCI CRITICISM OF INDIVIDUAL

EVENTS, I.E. TRIALS OF DISSIDENTS, CULTURAL CENSORSHIP, ETC, IN THE SOCIALIST SOCIETIES, WHICH THE COMMUNISTS ATTRIBUTE TO HUMAN SHORTCOMINGS, THEY STRESS THAT THE PARTY HAS FAILED TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION. THE OBSERVERS DESCRIBE THIS AS PCI FAILURE TO ANALYZE THE STRUCTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL WEAKNESS IN THESE SOCIETIES WHICH ALLOW THESE ILLIBERAL, ANTI-DEMOCRATIC ACTIONS TO PERPETUATE THEMSELVES. THUS THE PCI CONTINUES--THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION IS THE GREATEST EVENT OF THIS CENTURY--IN CONTRAST TO THE VIEWS OF THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER CARRILLO WHO ARGUES THAT A SOCIALIST SOCIETY DOES NOT EXIST IN THE USSR. THE PCI LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONDEMNS THE SOVIET-LED 1968 INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SUPPORTING THE SOVIET RIGHT TO INTERVENT MILITARILY IN HUNGARY IN 1956, ARGUING THAT ON THE LATTER OCCASION THE SOVIETS HAD THE RIGHT TO ACT SINCE ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES WERE ON THE VERGE OF DISPLACING A COMMUNIST LED REGIME. THE PCI CONTINUES TO RECEIVE INDIRECT FINANCING FROM THE SOVIET UNION, COOPERATES WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT (QUARTERLY BERLIN CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES), AND ON VIRTUALLY ALL MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES TAKES POSITIONS WHICH ARE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THOSE ADHERED TO BY THE USSR.

7. IN CONTRAST TO ITS RELUCTANCE, EXCEPT IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE PRESENT SOVIET TRIALS), TO CRITICIZE THE USSR, THE PCI HAS CONTINUED TO FOCUS ATTENTION TO SHORTCOMINGS IN AMERICAN POLICIES AND SOCIETY. (THIS CONTRASTS WITH QUOTE THE FRIENDSHIP TOWARD THE US END QUOTE MENTIONED IN REFTEL ALTHOUGH TOWARD THE US END QUOTE MENTIONED IN REFTEL ALTHOUGH WE ADMIT TO HAVING FOUND RECENTLY A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE US AND THE PART OF PCI LEADERS.) WHILE THE STRIDENT ANTI-AMERICAN TONES OF THE PAST ARE NOW ABSENT, IN PART SINCE THE PCI IS SEEKING SOME FORM OF AMERICAN BLESSING TO THE IDEA OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, PCI CONTROLLED MEDIA COVER IN EXCESS DEVELOPMENTS WHICH REFLECT UPON THE SEEDY SIDE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. IN COMPARISON, COVERAGE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OF THE OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES MARKEDLY LESS POINTED WITH LITTLE SPACE DEVOTED TO THE ORGANIC OR STRUCTURAL SHORTCOMINGS OF THOSE SOCIETIES.

8. OBVIOUSLY, PCI PRESENCE IN STRENGTH ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE PRESENTS CHALLENGES FOR AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THE PARTY'S POLICIES AND EVOLUTION

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REQUIRE CAREFUL ASSESSMENT AND CLOSE WATCHING. IF AMCONGEN MILAN'S CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ATTITUDES OF PCI OFFICIALS IN THE MILAN AREA COULD BE APPLIED TO THE PCI ON A NATIONAL BASIS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE PCI HAS EVOLVED TO THE POINT WHERE ITS PRESENCE IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD CARRY MINIMAL RISKS FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ITALIAN DEMOCRACY OR FOR AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS. WE FIND MILAN'S CONCLUSIONS TO BE EXCESSIVELY OPTIMISTIC AS APLIED TO THE PCI AS A WHOLE, ALTHOUGH IN THE FINAL

ANALYSIS THEQUESTION OF DIRECT PCI PARTICIPATION IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS ONE FOR THE ITALIANS THEMSELVES TO DEICIDE, WE SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT THAT UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES A COMMUNIST PRESENCE IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVDE AT LEAST SOME DESTABILIZING EFFECT ON THE US-ITALIAN RELATIONSHIP, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. IT WOULD PUT IMPORTANT US ALLIANCE INTERESTS AT RISK. ACCORDINGLY, WE DO NOT BELEIVE IT IS IN US INTEREST TO TAKE ANY STEPS WHICH WOULD ASSIST THE PCI IN ACHIEVING ITS GOAL OF PARTICIPATION IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, AND WE WHOULD CONTINUE TO STRESS THAT WE DO NOT FAVOR SUCH PARTICIPATION. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS CONCRETE ACTIONS AND NOT WORDS WHICH MUST BE THE ULTIMATE TEST OF THE DEGREE OFFPCI EVOLUTION.GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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